THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • WEDNESDAY • JUNE 17, 2020 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 16 • LATE CITY EDITION

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FIRST LIFE-SAVER FOR COVID FOUND IN LARGE UK TRIAL

Low-cost generic steroid reduced deaths by one-third among severely ill hospitalised people in a 6,000-patient trial

DEXAMETHASONE'S SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS

Patients who are on ventilators or on oxygen due to Covid-19 could benefit from dexamethasone. Scientists at the University of Oxford said their trial compared outcomes of 2,104 patients randomly given the drug with those of 4,321 patients who didn't get it. The drug reduced deaths by 35% in those on ventilators and by 20% in those only needing additional oxygen

HOW STEROID DRUGS WORK

- Dexamethasone tamps down the body's uncontrolled inflammatory response to the virus in very sick patients
- The drug didn't appear to help those not on respiratory support
- Experts urge caution about the trial results as they haven't been published yet in a peer-reviewed journal | P12

54,625

PEOPLE GLOBALLY ARE IN SERIOUS OR CRITICAL CONDITION DUE TO COVID-19

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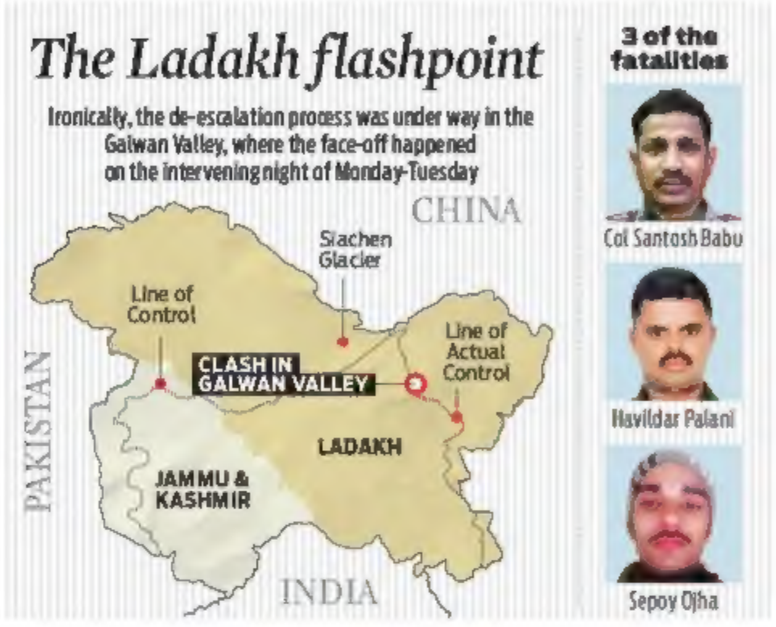
CHINA ATTACK KILLS 20 INDIAN SOLDIERS

PLA troops in full riot gear suddenly charged at Indian jawans on LAC; Colonel among those killed in action; many succumbed to injuries because of sub-zero temp; agencies claim China lost more soldiers than India



EXPERT TAKE

Lt Gen (retd) D S Hooda

The situation is extremely grave. It could become more difficult to find a peaceful a resolution. The future course will depend on the demands of the two sides and whether both are ready to reconcile

BR Deepak, Sinologist

Now that the balance of power in the region has tilted heavily in favour of China, Beijing wants to force New Delhi into solving the dispute on its terms. China comes to talks with conditions rarely acceptable to India

FULL COVERAGE

CHINA POLICY MAY NEED BIG REFORMS

Skirmishes amid de-escalation talks signal that a complete overhaul of policy is the need of the hour in India-China relations, experts say. A former ambassador to China said on the condition of anonymity that India needs to enhance its political and diplomatic engagement. Debashis Chaudhari of the Institute of Chinese Studies said PM Narendra Modi should leverage his friendly relations with Chinese President Xi Jinping for a breakthrough in talks | P7

BORDER AGREEMENTS FAIL TO STOP ATTACK

India and China have at least five border agreements and other mechanisms aimed at defusing border tensions, but the pacts in themselves cannot address the issue if the Line of Actual Control is not clearly demarcated, as per Sinologist BR Deepak. The bilateral agreements and mechanisms date back to 1993, 1996, 2005, 2012, and 2013. Even a joint working group formed in the 1980s failed to reach a consensus on the border issue | P7

DELAY IN INDIAN ARMY STATEMENT?

China's *Global Times* reported the killing of the soldiers much before the Indian Army issued a statement on the same, possibly giving an edge to China in building a narrative. Former Army Chief General VP Malik said: "Clear message should have come from the political and diplomatic leadership." He added that there was a delay in releasing India's official version. "The Chinese are the aggressors, then why are we allowing them to get away with the script?" | P7

MAYANK SINGH & PUSHKAR BANAKAR
@ New Delhi

IN what appears to be a dramatic meltdown of bilateral relations, India and China on Tuesday blamed each other for the worst face-off in 45 years that left 20 Indian soldiers dead, including one officer, along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Galwan area.

A terse late-night statement issued by the Army said: "Indian and Chinese troops have disengaged at the Galwan area where they had earlier clashed on the night of 15/16 June 2020. 17 Indian troops who were critically injured in the line of duty at the stand-off location and exposed to sub-zero temperatures in the high altitude terrain have succumbed to their injuries, taking the total that were killed in action to 20." An earlier statement said, "The loss of lives on the Indian side includes an officer and two soldiers."

While Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian accused Indian troops of crossing the LAC twice, leading to a serious clash, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said the face-off was a result of China unilaterally trying to alter the status quo.

"Our border troops had a high-level meeting and reached important consensus on easing the border situation, but astonishingly on June 15, the Indian troops seriously violated our consensus and twice crossed the border line for illegal activities and provoked and attacked Chinese personnel, which led to serious physical conflict between the two sides and China has lodged strong protest and representation with the Indian side," Zhao said.

Later in the day, a statement from Srivastava said, "While it was our expectation that this (de-escalation) would unfold smoothly, the Chinese side departed from the consensus to respect the LAC. On the late-evening and night of June 15, a violent face-off happened as a result of an attempt by the Chinese side to unilaterally change the status quo there. Both sides suffered casualties that could have been avoided had the agreement at the higher level been scrupulously followed by the Chinese side."

There were reports of Chinese fatalities too, but the state establishment has not put a figure to it yet. However, Hu Xijin, the editor of the *Global Times*, the Communist Party's mouthpiece, tweeted that there were Chinese casualties as well. Agencies in India put the Chinese troop toll at 43, but the figure could not be independently verified.

On the Indian side, the casualties include an officer of the rank of Colonel, said to be the Commanding Officer of an Infantry Unit, a JCO and a jawan.

The incident occurred when a large number of Chinese troops encircled Indian soldiers and beat them with rods and bamboos with nails on them. "The Chinese soldiers were in complete riot gear with helmets, shields and knee and elbow caps," informed a source. Senior military officials of the two sides have been meeting at the venue to defuse the situation, the army added. The last violent clash between troops of the two countries was reported in Arunachal Pradesh in 1975.

Later in the day, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the situation along with the Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat and the three Service Chiefs and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. Rajnath and Jaishankar later briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the phone, which was followed by a meeting between Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

Going forward, defence experts expect greater bilateral tension. "I see this stand-off leading to greater tension if what the Chinese want is unacceptable to us. If the Chinese agree to return to the original position along the LAC, then the tension could ease. But, this time the Chinese don't seem to be ready to vacate the areas," Lt Gen (retd) D S Hooda said.

Major General D K Mehta said, "The way China is cornered -- and there is tremendous pressure on China from all around -- this a tactic to whip up ultra-nationalism among the Chinese people who are suffering from the worst phase of their economy." China is browbeating countries in the South China Sea and is worried about the growing significance of Taiwan in geopolitics. It also is trying to pressure India into not getting involved in the affairs of the World Health Organization, like the probe into the origin of the coronavirus and entry of Taiwan as an observer, added Maj Gen Mehta.

Diplomatic experts called for an overhaul of Delhi's policy on China. "It is high time India starts to look towards China through a different prism. By merely saying we are not the India of 1962, resolution of border differences will not happen. We need to act. We need to be cautious about our neighbour at all times and stand up to its aggression," a former Indian Ambassador to China said.

History repeats as Chinese ambushed Indian soldiers, killed four of them in 1975

- The last clash between Indian and Chinese troops that led to casualties took place in 1975
- An Indian patrol team of Assam Rifles personnel were killed in an ambush by Chinese troops in Tulung La in Arunachal Pradesh
- India alleged that the Chinese army crossed into Indian territory and attacked soldiers, lodged strong protest
- But China blamed India, claimed its army opened fire in 'self-defence' as a group of Indian soldiers crossed the 'Line of Control'
- A US State Department cable backed the Indian version, said the 'Chinese ambush was sprung 500 metres south of Tulung La' on the Indian side
- The Indian patrol had six jawans. Four of them died, but two escaped as they were at the rear of the team

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BORDER ROW

Hold all-party meet, says Deve Gowda

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

TERMING the violence and death of Indian Army personnel at Galwan Valley in East Ladakh on Monday night as 'disturbing', former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda has called for transparency from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the matter.

Deve Gowda (87) said that PM Modi or Defence Minister Rajnath Singh should provide clarity in the interest of the nation. He also suggested holding an all-party meeting to discuss the situation.

Moments after the Indian Army's statement came, confirming the escalation, Gowda sought to know how Indian soldiers had lost their lives during efforts to de-escalate the tension. P5

K'taka for easing more curbs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

SEEKING further relaxations in lockdown norms will be top on Karnataka's agenda during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction with Chief Ministers on Wednesday evening.

"The lockdown is not required and we will ask for more relaxations to boost economic activities," Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa told mediapersons on Tuesday after taking part in a special puja at Shankar Mutt here.

The CM said they have taken several steps to contain the spread of Covid-19, initiated measures to boost economic activities and also provided financial assistance to weaker sections. On Wednesday, the state will appeal to the PM for further relaxations so that these sections can return to normal lives, he said. P5

1 TESTS POSITIVE IN VIKASA SOUDHA

A 42-year-old woman employee of the Food and Civil Supplies department tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday. About 15 people who were in contact with her have been out under quarantine. The patient is now being treated at Victoria Hospital and sources said that people's entry into Vikasa Soudha was restricted temporarily as a precautionary measure. The department office will be closed for 12 hours for sanitisation.

GOVT TO ROPE IN PVT HOSPITALS

With Covid-19 cases on the rise, the State Government has decided to rope in private hospitals to reduce the burden on designated government hospitals. Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Tuesday said that fixed rates will be charged for treatment at these private hospitals, which will be announced soon. As cases are spiking over the past two weeks, Covid-19 Care Centres will be set up to monitor and treat infected persons who are asymptomatic. P4

GREEN SHOOTS OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY VISIBLE: MODI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday hailed the collective response of chief ministers to the Covid-19 pandemic, saying it showcased the best of cooperative federalismin the country. He also drew satisfaction from the green shoots in the economy and reiterated the importance of livelihood.

"On the one hand, health infrastructure will need to be boosted with emphasis on testing and tracing. Economic activity will also need to be increased," Modi told the CMs in his concluding remarks. P8